

4.3.3.2.1.7 Cultural and Paleontological Resources

This section discusses construction and operational impacts to cultural and paleontological resources that may result from the ceramic immobilization facility at each of the representative sites analyzed. The total land disturbed for this facility is 28.3 ha (70 acres) during construction of which 18.2 ha (45 acres) would be used during operation. [Text deleted.] For the discussion of impacts, the term cultural resources includes prehistoric, historic, and Native American resources. Cultural and paleontological resources at the representative sites may be affected directly through ground disturbance during construction, visual intrusion of the project to the historic setting or environmental context of historic sites, visual and audio intrusions to Native American resources, reduced access to traditional use areas, and unauthorized artifact collecting and vandalism.

Hanford Site

The facility would be constructed west of the 200 East Area. Although no archaeological resources were identified during surveys conducted in the adjacent 200 Areas, some may exist in the project area. Any such sites may be identified through additional surveys. Any identified sites would be avoided. Operation would not result in additional impact.

Although all of Hanford is considered sacred land by some Native American groups, no areas of great cultural significance have been identified close to the 200 Areas. Resources may be identified through project-specific consultation. Impacts from construction and operation may include reduced access to traditional use areas or visual or auditory intrusion into sacred or ceremonial space.

Pliocene and Pleistocene fossil remains have been discovered at Hanford. Although none have been recorded in the project area, they may exist. These resources may be affected by ground disturbing construction. Operation would not have an additional impact on paleontological resources.

Nevada Test Site

The ceramic immobilization facility would be constructed in Area 6, near the DAF on Frenchman Flat. In 1984, a Class III cultural resources survey was conducted across the 660-ha (1,610-acre) DAF site and no NRHP-eligible sites were identified. Although no resources were identified within the DAF project area, Frenchman Flat contains 49 sites which have been determined eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. Recorded prehistoric sites within Frenchman Flat include base and temporary camps, quarries, and lithic reduction areas. Identified historic resources include sites associated with nuclear testing and research. Additional unsurveyed lands necessary for the proposed facility may contain similar prehistoric or historic resources. Impacts to resources would occur during construction, but not operation, of the facility.

The CGTO has conducted surveys over portions of Frenchman Flat and has identified at least 20 plant species of importance to Native Americans there. Additional project-specific consultations would be necessary to identify impacts to Native American resources resulting from facility construction and operation. Potential impacts include reduced access to traditional use areas and visual or auditory intrusions to sacred space or ceremonial space.

Although none have been identified to date, Quaternary deposits containing scientifically valuable paleontological remains may occur in the area to be disturbed during construction. Such remains have been found near NTS. Paleontological remains may be affected by construction, but not operation, of the facility.

Idaho National Engineering Laboratory

The facility would be constructed within the existing ICPP security area. No sites have been identified through surface surveys of the area. Because the ICPP is developed and disturbed, it is unlikely to contain subsurface

cultural deposits. Impacts to NRHP-eligible sites are not anticipated during construction or operation of the facility.

Some Native American resources such as traditional use areas and sacred space may be affected by the construction of the facility. For example, construction and operation could create auditory or visual impacts to important Native American resources in the vicinity. Resources would be identified through consultation with the potentially affected tribes.

Some paleontological remains may be encountered during construction. The ICPP lies on alluvial gravels associated with the Big Lost River Floodplain which have produced fossilized remains. Operation would not have an additional effect on these resources.

Pantex Plant

The ceramic immobilization facility would be constructed in Zone 4 of Pantex. A historic buildings survey was conducted in Zone 4 to identify significant World War II Era structures and none of the buildings there are considered NRHP eligible on that basis. [Text deleted.] Archaeological surveys would be conducted on any unsurveyed areas that would be affected by construction prior to ground-breaking activities. Because the area is developed and disturbed, it is unlikely to contain NRHP-eligible archaeological resources. Recorded prehistoric site types at Pantex include lithic scatters, hunting/kill sites, and concentrations of fire-cracked rock. Sites are located predominantly near the playas. Historic sites are generally associated with farming, such as remains of homes and outbuildings as well as World War II and Cold War Era structures. Resources such as these may occur on the land to be disturbed during construction. Operation would not result in any additional impact to prehistoric or historic resources.

DOE has initiated a public outreach program at Pantex to involve Native American groups in decisionmaking related to land use and cultural resources. To date, none of the Native American tribes known to have traditional interest in Pantex lands have identified any sacred sites, ceremonial areas, or cemeteries near Zone 4. Additional consultation may identify some of these resources. Resources such as cemeteries could be affected by new construction. Operation could have an auditory or visual impact on sacred or ceremonial sites.

Important paleontological remains such as bison and camel bones have been found in other areas of the High Plains and it is possible that some may occur in lands to be disturbed by construction at Pantex. Operation would not have an additional effect on these resources.

Oak Ridge Reservation

This facility would be constructed at the intersection of Route 95 and Bear Creek Road. A portion of the proposed project area on both sides of Bear Creek Road was surveyed in association with the proposed Exxon Nuclear Facility, which was never built (OR UTN 1975a:ii). Some prehistoric sites were identified near the Clinch River, and the potential for sites along the smaller creeks exists. In addition, remains of a number of 20th-century frame houses and mid-to-late 19th century log houses and outbuildings are located within the project area. Survey work would be conducted prior to construction on any unsurveyed lands to be affected by construction. Prehistoric site types that are known to occur at ORR include remains of prehistoric villages, burial grounds, quarries and lithic workshops, and shell scatters. Historic resources may include standing structures, as well as remains of dwellings, road traces, cemeteries, and trash scatters. Resources such as these may occur in the area and may be affected by construction, but not operation, of the facility.

Some Native American resources may be affected by construction and operation of the facility. These resources, should any exist, would be identified through consultation with the potentially affected tribes. For example, construction could affect traditionally used plant and animal species. Operation may result in reduced access to traditional use areas or visual or auditory intrusion into sacred or ceremonial space.

Fossilized remains occur at ORR. Some of these may exist in areas to be disturbed during construction. However, any impacts would be considered negligible because the fossil assemblages at ORR consist of common invertebrates with low research potential. Operation would not affect paleontological remains.

Savannah River Site

The ceramic immobilization facility would be located in open space within F-Area. Portions of F-Area have been surveyed and contain sites potentially eligible for the NRHP. Additional surveys would be conducted in unsurveyed areas to be disturbed by construction. Site types known to occur at SRS include remains of prehistoric base camps, quarries, and workshops. Historic resources include remains of farmsteads, cemeteries, churches, and schools. Resources such as these may be affected by construction but not operation.

Some Native American resources may be affected by the proposed action. Construction may affect resources such as prehistoric sites, cemeteries, and traditional plants. Facility operation could result in reduced access to traditional use areas or sacred space. Visual or auditory intrusions to the areas may also result from facility construction and operation. Any resources would be identified through consultation with the potentially affected tribes.

No scientifically valuable paleontological resources have been recorded at SRS to date. Facility construction and operation are not expected to have an effect on paleontological resources.

| [Text deleted.]